

## THE OLD STONE HOUSE.

The old stone house is standing still,  
Just as it did, dear May,  
When great-grandmother moved about  
In peaceful happy days.

But from the windows deep and wide,  
No smile to us is given;  
The face that met us at the door  
Is smiling now in Heaven.

Grandmother, too, who won our hearts  
With thick, well-buttered bread,  
Spread deep with sugar on the top,  
Before we went to bed.

And who those stories used to tell,  
As pleased our childish ears,  
About the olden days, when life  
Was full of joy and tears.

Gone are the tiny pages of glass  
On which we wrote our names;  
Your close to Will's, mine next to Frank's,  
Our happy childish flames.

The dear old stoop is growing weak  
Where once we took our tea  
On pleasant summer afternoons,  
From care and trouble free.

Dear mother played there when a child,  
And so did you and I;  
For generations, as the years  
Crept slowly, surely by.

Weddings, births and funerals  
The dear old house has seen;  
Smiles and tears, hopes and fears  
And frolics wild, I ween.

But now it stands all empty there  
Its music died, dear May,  
And my eyes are red with weeping  
For the loved ones passed away.

—JOHN L. JONES, in Good Housekeeping.

## LONE HOLLOW;

Or, The Peril of the Penroys.

A Thrilling and Romantic Story

of Love and Adventure.

BY JAMES M. MERRILL, AUTHOR OF "BOGUS

BILL," "FISHER JOE" AND

OTHER STORIES.

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## CHAPTER XII.—CONTINUED.

His brain was in a whirl, and he was not

at ease by any means. Hank Cabera had

seen his hand and might prove dangerous

in the time to come.

"I fear that I forgot prudence when I let

"so much be known to that low scoundrel,"

mused the Captain; "but then what can it

matter? I do not believe that the body of

the dead girl will ever be found. She was

only a poor orphan any how, and the hub-

bub will soon die out. Once I step into old

Vandible's shoes I can defy the world.

Money is the lever that moves all mankind,

and with that I am utterly safe. I have

gone too far now to recede. My hand is laid

at the root of the tree and I will proceed to

the consummation. I have the subtle poison

and that must do its work at once.

"It's lucky Wentworth did not get that

letter. I'll answer it myself, or send some-

thing to write to the breach between Grace

and the mechanic."

It did seem that every thing worked to

the success of the scheming villain's plans.

When Captain Starbright reached Lone

Hollow at a late hour in the evening he was

met with the announcement from Grace

that her grandfather was ill and in bed.

"I hope he is not seriously sick," said the

Captain.

"Troubles do not come singly," returned

Grace. "I think it is worry more than

anything else, over the disappearance of Lura,

that has prostrated grandpa."

"Old people are apt to borrow trouble. I

will go up and see the old man if you will

permit it."

"Certainly. You may be able to cheer

him up a bit. Any news from Lura?"

"None. You have heard her name."

"Not a word. I am looking for the worst

now," declared Grace, in a tremulous voice.

"Be firm, my dear Grace," he urged in a

tender, hopeful voice. "I am not yet will-

ing to give up hope."

Grace turned away, ready to cry, and the

Captain hurried at once to the spacious bed-

room on the first floor allotted to old Morgan

Vandible. It was the largest room of the

kind in the house. The furniture was

massive, and of ancient pattern, the huge,

high-posted bedstead reminding one of Noah

and his ark.

The curtains about the bed were pushed

back, and a gray, sunken face lay among

the pillows. The old man was breathing

heavily and groaning.

"Do be quiet, father, you aren't half as

bad off as you pretend."

It was Mrs. Penroy who uttered the

and solid, to hold water, for I don't want

anybody picking flaws with it after I am

dead."

"No, of course not. Haven't you a good

lawyer?"

"No. I never patronized them. I man-

aged to get on well enough, and lay up

money, without consulting a crafty lawyer

at every turn. My motto always was, the

less you have to do with such chaps the bet-

ter."

"A very good motto."

"Yes," with a low laugh. "In the present

case, however, I suppose a lawyer must

come in."

"I suppose so."

"Whom would you recommend?"

"You trust to my judgment on this sub-

ject?" queried the Captain, elated in spite

of himself at the turn affairs were taking.

"Implicitly."

"Then I would name Seekmore Gripes, of

Stonefield. I have always found him reli-

able."

"Very well—send for him."

"In the morning?"

"Now."

Captain Starbright came to his feet, then

seemed to hesitate.

"Is it necessary for such great haste?"

"Do as I bid," ordered the old man. "If

I die without making my will the ungrate-

ful Martha will get my property, and I

don't mean that she shall have a penny."

"I will send for the lawyer at once, and

for a physician?"

"No, no. Send Grace here. I will see

none of the leeches, confound 'em," growled

the old man, in such a fierce way as to

prove conclusively to the Captain that

Vandible was not in such desperate straits

as he imagined.

He left the room, found Grace and sent

her to her grandfather, and then went

forth to the stables.

"I'll go myself," he muttered. "I don't

believe the old man will die to-night, but

it's well enough to have every thing pre-

pared. I can see that every thing will go

to Grace. If I can make it contingent on

her marrying me, a master-stroke will be

in. I know I can trust Seekmore Gripes.

He'd sell his soul for pelf." Noon after the

Captain was on the road to Stonefield.

## CHAPTER XIII.

ONE MINUTE TOO LATE.

It was two hours after midnight when

Captain Starbright and a companion were

ushered into the sick room at Lone Hollow.

"How is he?" questioned the Captain of

the girl, who sat beside her couch.

"He has been very restless," answered

Grace, in a voice that evinced deep anxiety.

"I have brought something that may do

him good," and the Captain produced a

small bottle from an inner pocket, and

poured a part of the contents into a glass

that stood on a stand at the bedside.

The old man refused to touch it, however.

He glanced at the Captain's companion and

growled:

"A doctor—a miserable leech! Did I not

tell you it was a lawyer I wanted?"

"And I have brought one. Allow me to

introduce my friend Gripes, Mr. Vandible."

The sick man glanced at the bald little

man who bobbed his head in recognition of

the introduction. Mr. Gripes was thin to

attenuation, with projecting gray brows,

deep-set ferret eyes, and wrinkled neck

and cheeks, the very personification of a

sharp attorney.

He polished his hat with his elbow and

stood ready to make himself useful.

The Captain glanced at Grace, then at the

old man on the bed. He nodded to the girl,

who understood, and walked from the room

with the assurance that she would be called

if her presence was needed.

Clearing his throat, Lawyer Gripes as-

sumed a seat at the bedside, depositing his

hat under the medicine-stand, and then said

in a low, insinuating voice:

"I understand that you wish some legal

papers drawn, Mr. Vandible?"

"I want a will made," returned the old

man bluntly, and far from weakly.

"Exactly, exactly," rubbing his hands to-

gether rapidly. "I suppose you have de-

cided upon the terms of this will?"

"I have. I leave every thing I have in

the world to my granddaughter, Grace

Penroy."

"Then it will be a comparatively short

process to make out the document."

The old lawyer moved aside, drew some

papers from his pocket, withdrew with pen

and ink, and was soon writing rapidly.

At length a touch on the shoulder caused

him to cease writing and look up. Captain

Starbright stood at his elbow. The two ex-

changed glances, the lawyer nodded, and

then the Captain stepped aside.

"Now, as to the terms of this will?"

questioned Seekmore Gripes.

"It is necessary to enumerate the prop-

erty?"

"Not unless you wish to bequeath part—"

"It all goes to my granddaughter," to the

last farthing. I told you that before," re-

ported the old man, in a vexed tone.

"Very good. Ahem—it seems to me that

in a certain contingency some other

provision ought to be made," suggested the

lawyer, still holding his pen suspended,

glancing under his spectacles at the old

man on the bed.

"Some other contingency? Confound it,

sir, if you can't write out the document to

suit me you may go. I'll employ a man next

time of some sense, I will."

"Very good," answered Gripes, not the

least disconcerted by the rude language of

the invalid. "It shall be as you say, only

should any thing happen—"

"Happen? Confound it, sir, what do you

expect to happen?"

"Nothing out of nature, yet what you must

remember that it is sometimes the unexpected

that does happen. It is customary in will-

ing property to provide for such a con-

tingency. For instance, should this young

lady, your respected granddaughter, die

before this will is probated the property

would then revert to the legal heirs if any

existed, which might be contrary to the

wishes of the testator."

Then Mr. Seekmore Gripes dropped his

pen to the paper once more for the purpose

of continuing his writing.

"Stop! you're right," cried Vandible, in

a husky voice, his face glowing suddenly

pale. "The ungrateful Martha shall never

inherit one cent, never a cent, I say. Put

in another name in case of the contingency

you mentioned; put one in, Mr. Gripes."

"Well?"

"Have you got it in?"

"I am waiting to hear the name."

"Eh! Well, that's a fact."

Morgan Vandible contracted his brows

as if in deep thought. Just then Captain

Starbright stepped into his vision. This

move at once gave the old man an idea.

"Yes, yes, that's it," he whispered, seem-

ing to grow weak suddenly. "Put in his

name, the Captain's, he's a good friend to

me, a good friend."

"Thank you, sir," said the Captain, with

his hand on his heart, "you do me ex-

traordinary honor."

Scratch, scratch, scratch.

The pen of Seekmore Gripes was once

more at work. In a little time the impor-

tant paper that was to convey more than a

million dollars was completed. It was a

business-like document—the lawyer had

drawn up scores of them—and bequeathed

all the Vandible property, real and personal,

to the testator's beloved granddaughter,

Grace Penroy. In case the girl should die

before coming of age, yet two years away,

then the property was to go to his wife—

"It was evidently the old man's intention

to sign the will," pursued Captain Star-

bright.

"It was his first intention," returned Mr.

Gripes, significantly.

"There is a million at stake, Mr. Gripes."

The lawyer nodded.

"Just turn your back one moment."

Seekmore Gripes did so.

He heard the scratch, scratch of a pen,

then the Captain's voice:

"See here, Mr. Gripes."

The lawyer turned about and came for-

ward, peering over the Captain's shoulder

and catching a glimpse of the table. One

glance sufficed to show that the will bore in

proper place the name of Morgan Vandible.

"How is that?"

"It looks fair," admitted the lawyer.

"It is fair. I have only carried out the

old man's intentions, certainly."

"Well, first intentions are the best ones,"

asserted Captain Starbright. "I want you

to take possession of the will, Mr. Gripes,

and bring it forward at the proper time."

"There are no witnesses as yet."

"True; that important part must not be

forgotten. Will it do for me to sign as

one?"

"If no contest is made there might be no

objection," returned the lawyer.

"I haven't any fear of that. There is only

one living direct heir, and she is willing and

anxious to accept such a disposition of the

property as this will decrees."

Then the Captain signed the paper as a

witness. Mr. Gripes noticed that he wrote

the name "Clinton Starbright."

"My middle name," explained the wily

Captain. "Should it be necessary, I could

deny that it was me that signed. Isn't that

restorable?"

"Possibly."

Seekmore Gripes was a man of few words,

and he was not lavish of them on the pres-

ent occasion. It might be that he did not

wish to fully commit himself to the power

of Captain Starbright. He was wily and

suspicious, and was seldom caught napping.

"If another witness is necessary you